

## Duck with Cherries and Red Wine Vinegar

Serves 6

### DUCK

- 2 duck breasts, about 450 g each
- Salt
- 1 tsp black peppercorns
- ½ tsp allspice berries
- 4 cloves
- 2 bay leaves
- ½ tsp fennel seeds



### SAUCE

- 50 g sugar
- 120 ml red wine vinegar
- 120 ml red wine
- 240 ml chicken broth
- 1 T grated fresh ginger
- Pinch of cayenne
- Kosher salt
- 28 g butter
- 225 g ripe cherries, halved and pitted (or canned cherries)
- 2 tsp granulated sugar
- 1 T kirsch or Cognac

1. Trim excess fat from duck breasts, leaving a 6-mm layer covering the breast. With a sharp knife, lightly score fat cover diagonally in two directions, taking care not to cut too deeply and expose meat. Turn breasts over and remove the thin tenderloins from underside. Trim away any veiny or ragged bits. Season generously on both sides with salt.
2. Pulverize the **peppercorns, allspice berries, cloves, bay leaves** and **fennel seed** in a mortar or electric spice mill. Sprinkle spice mixture over duck breasts; massage seasoning into meat on both sides. For more-intense flavor, do this several hours ahead or overnight and refrigerate (recommended). Bring duck to room temperature before cooking.

#### Make the sauce:

3. Put **sugar** and **red wine vinegar** in a saucepan and simmer over medium-high heat **for 2 minutes**, until syrupy.
4. Add **red wine** and **chicken broth** and simmer briskly until sauce coats spoon, **about 5 minutes**.
5. Stir in **ginger, cayenne** and ½ tsp salt. Set aside. There should be about 240 ml of sauce. (Sauce may be made a day or two in advance, if desired.)
6. Place a wide cast-iron pan over medium high heat. When pan is hot, place duck breasts side by side, skin side down. Let sizzle gently for **about 7 minutes**, until skin is crisp and golden, turning down heat as necessary to keep from getting too dark. Turn breasts over and **cook 5 to 7 minutes**

more. (Alternatively, finish cooking breasts in a 200°C oven.) Check temperature frequently with an instant-read thermometer; internal temperature should be a bit less than 52°C. Remove breasts and let rest on a warm platter for 8 to 10 minutes.

7. To finish sauce, put **butter** in a saucepan over medium high heat. Add **cherries** and granulated **sugar** and cook for a minute or two, stirring, until cherries are heated through and beginning to get juicy. Add **kirsch or cognac** and cook 1 minute more, then add previously prepared sauce and bring to a simmer.
8. Thinly slice duck breasts at an angle and arrange slices on a platter. Spoon some of the sauce and cherries over meat and pass remaining sauce at table.